

What is claimed is:

1. An isolated fusion protein comprising a stress protein or a portion thereof and a hepatitis B virus (HBV) core antigen, wherein the fusion protein, when administered to
5 an individual, induces or enhances an immune response against the HBV core antigen.

2. The fusion protein in claim 1, wherein the stress protein is a heat shock protein.

3. The fusion protein of claim 1, wherein the stress protein is selected from the Hsp10,
10 Hsp40, Hsp60, Hsp70, Hsp90, Hsp100-200, Hsp100, Lon, TF55, Hsp40, FKBP, cyclophilin, Hsp20-30, ClpP, GrpE, ubiquitin, calnexin, or protein disulfide isomerase or small molecular weight family of stress proteins.

4. The fusion protein of claim 3, wherein the stress protein is *M. bovis BCG* hsp65.
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5. The fusion protein of claim 1, wherein the HBV core antigen comprises a fragment of the HBV core antigen lacking all or part of the C-terminal arginine-rich domain.

6. The fusion protein of claim 5, wherein the HBV core antigen fragment comprises
20 amino acid 1 to 149 or amino acid 1 to 151 of the core antigen of the HBV adw strain.

7. A fusion protein comprising the sequence shown in any one of Figures 6, 8, 10 or 12.

8. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the fusion protein of any one of claims 1
25 to 7.

9. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 8, further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or excipient.
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10. An isolated nucleic acid comprising a sequence that encodes the fusion protein of any of claims 1 to 7.

11. An isolated nucleic acid comprising a sequence shown in any one of Figures 5, 7, 9 or 11.

12. An expression vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 10 or 11.

13. A retroviral vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 10 or 11.

14. A cell comprising the expression vector of claim 12.

15. A method of making a fusion protein according to any one of claims 1 to 7, the method comprising:

- (a) providing the cell of claim 14, and
- (b) culturing the cell under conditions that permit expression of the nucleic acid.

16. A method of inducing or enhancing an immune response against an HBV core antigen in a subject, the method comprising administering to the subject an effective amount of the fusion protein of any of claims 1 to 7.

17. A method of inducing or enhancing an immune response against an HBV core antigen in a subject, the method comprising administering to the subject an effective amount of the pharmaceutical composition of claim 8.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the pharmaceutical composition further comprises a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or excipient.

19. A method of inducing or enhancing an immune response against an HBV core antigen, the method comprising administering to a subject an effective amount of the expression vector of claim 12.

20. A method of inducing or enhancing an immune response against an HBV core antigen, the method comprising administering to a subject an effective amount of the expression vector of claim 13.

20. A method of inducing or enhancing an immune response against an HBV core antigen, the method comprising administering to a subject an effective amount of the expression vector of claim 13.